

U.S. Department of Education
2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Kevin Finnegan

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Prairie Hill Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 14714 Willowbrook Rd

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City South Beloit State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 61080-9556

County Winnebago County State School Code Number* _____

Telephone 815-389-3957 Fax 815-389-8582

Web site/URL http://www.prairiehill.org E-mail finnegank@prairiehill.org

Twitter Handle @prairiehill133 Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Theodore Rehl E-mail: rehlt@prairiehill.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Prairie Hill Ccsd 133 Tel. 815-389-3957

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Jerry Barenbaum
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 3 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	15	10	25
K	31	34	65
1	40	35	75
2	32	28	60
3	42	43	85
4	44	56	100
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total Students	204	206	410

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 8%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	26
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	30
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	387
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.078
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2%
10 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 4
 Specify non-English languages: Gujarati, Spanish, Russian, Polish
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 17%
 Total number students who qualify: 71

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

9. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
41 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 11 Autism | 0 Orthopedic Impairment |
| 0 Deafness | 2 Other Health Impaired |
| 0 Deaf-Blindness | 7 Specific Learning Disability |
| 2 Emotional Disturbance | 11 Speech or Language Impairment |
| 1 Hearing Impairment | 1 Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 1 Mental Retardation | 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| 0 Multiple Disabilities | 5 Developmentally Delayed |

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	21
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals	13
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No X

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

PART III – SUMMARY

Prairie Hill School, located in South Beloit, Illinois, began as a one-room schoolhouse in 1952 serving 86 students, Kindergarten (K) through grade eight. Since then it has grown into an elementary school that serves 411 students, pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) through grade four. Despite its growth, it has managed to maintain a small town, close-knit climate. While there is no Prairie Hill town, the school is a community unto itself—a place where families have worked together to nurture the whole child.

The mission of Prairie Hill is to provide learning opportunities and experiences to students that foster a lifetime of growth and development. This is achieved through the collaboration of educators, support staff, board members, and parents. Together these stakeholders are united in the creation of a community of self-directed, responsible citizens who are challenged to reach their full potential. The school is dedicated to maintaining a rigorous curriculum, dynamic fine arts programs, research-based classroom practices, motivated educators and administrators, and involved parents.

Prairie Hill's high achievement on state testing is a reflection of its progressive, student-led philosophy. The school was awarded the Academic Excellence Award by the state of Illinois in recognition of 90 percent of students passing the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) for three consecutive years. It has also been a School Search Bright Star Award recipient for the past five years, a commendation for schools who display high student performance despite having low funding per pupil. This is all accomplished while maintaining a family-friendly, small school atmosphere.

The 65 teachers, certified paraprofessionals, and support staff work diligently in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to research best practices in order to create authentic learning experiences, on-going effective assessments, enrichment for high-achieving students, and interventions for struggling students. Prairie Hill houses two Golden Apple winners, one Nationally Board Certified educator, and over half of its certified staff has earned a master's degree. It is commonplace for School Improvement Days to be filled with workshops facilitated by colleagues in a genuine attempt to share knowledge and foster professional development.

The progressive philosophy of Prairie Hill has also led to the development of one of the first blended pre-K programs in the area. The program is fully inclusive, serving students with special needs alongside general education students, in an attempt to identify and provide intervention for students who traditionally struggle upon grade K entrance. This program echoes the school's overarching, proactive educational principles.

To walk the halls on any given day would be to experience what makes Prairie Hill shine bright. The shared purpose of caring for its children, emotionally as well as academically, is instantly recognizable. The principal and superintendent greet students by name in the halls. Students eagerly recite the morning announcements, and the staff promotes character education by recognizing individual acts of caring. The lower grade classes can be seen learning alongside their upper grade reading buddies. Every student's birthday is celebrated by the reading, signing and gifting of a book of his/her choice from the principal in his office. Works of writing, music, and displays of student art work fill the hallways. After school, the experience continues as students needing additional assistance with homework can obtain help from teachers. In these ways, and many more, the Prairie Hill philosophy can be seen, felt and heard on a daily basis.

Through an ideal blend of involved families, engaged students, and committed staff, Prairie Hill has built a school that is worthy of the distinction of the National Blue Ribbon Program. Early in its heritage, Prairie Hill was often referred to by parents, staff, administrators, and community members as the area's "best kept secret." Together, a school community has been created that is the area's "best kept secret" no more.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

a) Prairie Hill is proud of its tradition as one of the highest-achieving public schools in Illinois in the measures of standardized assessments. Annually, the school is assessed through the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in March. The test monitors student performance in math and reading for students in grades three and four, while grade four students are also assessed in science. In 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013, Prairie Hill was awarded the Illinois Academic Excellence Award for sustained excellence as an elementary school in which 90% of the students had passed the state tests for a minimum of three years.

The state assessments have four performance levels: Academic Warning, Below State Standards, Meets State Standards, and Exceeds State Standards. (More information about the ISAT levels can be viewed at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/isat.htm>.)

While the state goal is for schools to achieve performance levels of Meets State Standards, Prairie Hill strives for its students to attain the Exceeds State Standards measure. Over the past five years, nearly 52 percent of students Exceeded standards in grade three math, more than 46 percent of students Exceeded standards in grade three reading and 43 percent of grade four Exceeded standards in both reading and math. During that same five-year period, 93 percent of all students at Prairie Hill Met or Exceeded state standards.

b) Over the past five years, despite spending only 70 percent per student in instructional costs compared to the state average (reference: http://iirc.niu.edu/Classic/School.aspx?source=Finances&source2=Expenditure_Rates&schoolID=041011330042001&level=S), Prairie Hill has far out-paced the state in achievement levels. In 2013, students performed 26 percentage points higher than the state average in both grade three and grade four math. Similarly, the grade three and grade four reading scores out-performed the state average by more than 22 percentage points.

During the 2012-2013 school year, the state of Illinois introduced changes in the cut scores that better aligned the test with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In sum, cut scores in math and reading were raised, with math scores experiencing a 14 percent increase in grade three and a ten percent increase in grade four. In essence, what were once scores that would Meet the State Standards would now fall into the Below State Standards category at a much greater rate.

Prairie Hill's consistent goal of striving for the highest achievement level (Exceeds Standards) allowed for a much less drastic dip in scores as compared to other schools throughout the state. Scores dipped from 97 percent of all students Meeting and Exceeding the state standards on all assessments in 2011-2012 to 83 percent of all students doing so in 2012-2013. However, due to the change in cut scores, the raw scores are a better indicator of sustained and/or improved performance. When compared to the previous year, the raw data showed that reading scores remained at the same level of 97 percent Meets and Exceeds State Standards, while the raw math scores improved to 98 percent of all students Meets or Exceeds all state standards.

Over the five-year testing period (2009-2013), Prairie Hill has outscored the state average on every assessment by at least ten percentage points. In 2011, 2012, and 2013, the Rockford Register Star reviewed assessment data for all 119 schools in the Rock River Valley, with Prairie Hill School scoring the highest of all non-magnet public schools each year. While having a diverse population in terms of backgrounds, ethnicities, and races, few groups are populous enough to produce sub-groups in our testing scores. Only during the past two years have there been enough students to qualify low-income families as a subgroup. Yet in each of those years, there was never greater than 13 students at any grade-level qualifying as low-income. Therefore there was not enough data from such a small sample size to make any reasonable determinations.

While grades Kindergarten (K) through two are not assessed by the state, assessments such as easyCBM (www.easycbm.com) allow teachers to monitor the progress of students in reading compared to national norms. During the most recent winter benchmark assessments (2014), students in grade K were in the 95th percentile in both letter sounds and word reading fluency. Grade one students were in the 78th percentile for both word reading fluency and passage reading fluency while grade two students were in the 70th percentile in passage reading fluency. From grade K on, the Prairie Hill staff is pushing students to achieve at the highest academic levels possible.

2. Using Assessment Results:

In 2012, the Prairie Hill schedule was modified to block off a Response to Intervention (RtI) time within the day as a means to conduct formative assessments and use these results to inform instruction. Every grade level designated a half-hour in which nothing new was taught, yet enrichment was provided for higher-achieving students and intervention for struggling students. In 2013, the schedule was retooled even further to allow each grade level common planning time. This planning time allowed teachers to compare assessment results, classroom strategies and curricular alignment. Now, every grade level has one hour daily of common planning time in which the teachers collaborate as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). In this way, all students are shared by all teachers.

The RtI model of assessment for instruction looks different in every grade, constructed to fit the grade level and the students. Students in grade K move from class to class during the RtI block, working on letter names, letter sounds, fine motor skills, social groups, sight words, and other groups that are assessed to measure growth. In grade one, teachers focus on students with reading and math concerns. Two Reading Recovery-certified classroom teachers work with the lowest-performing students from a grade-administered observation survey and provide them with in-depth daily interventions. Additionally, each grade at Prairie Hill completes a quarterly benchmark assessment that indicates where each student is in relation to grade-level expectations. This assessment informs the classroom teacher and is also used to provide parents with an understanding of what can be done at home to further their child's growth.

In contrast, the performance levels from the ISATs have little impact in the instruction. The state test is taken in March and the individual results are not available until the following school year in September. By that time students are assigned to different teachers, with some attending a different school. Instead, the assessments used by Prairie Hill are those that have an immediate impact on classroom instruction. These grade-level approved, formative assessments are a reflection of the concepts students have been exposed to in the classroom. In essence, the ISAT results serve as validation of the instruction that students are receiving at Prairie Hill and at home.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

At Prairie Hill students are taught that learning from, and with, your peers is one of the best means of extending knowledge. That theme runs true with the staff as well, as they expand their knowledge and opportunities by collaborating and sharing information with other schools and educational resources.

Some of the Prairie Hill educators spend their evening and weekend hours collaborating and teaching others at the college level at both of the area higher educational facilities, Rock Valley College and Rockford University. These teachers guide college students through higher level math skills, for example, and share their well-honed strategies with pre-service teachers.

The Special Education Cooperative that serves the district makes available professionals who provide services to children in need of supplemental support via occupational, physical, hearing and vision therapy services, as well as support for specific learning challenges. The staff collaborates and shares activities, ideas and strategies for successfully supporting these students in inclusive settings. Educators in the building continually collaborate with special education professionals in other area districts to most effectively provide services to all of the students. By sharing experiences and strategies and a vast knowledge base, powerful partnerships have been created in support of the children in all area districts.

The office of Dr. Donna Turetgen, Au.D., who operates a branch of Northwestern Illinois Association of Audiology, is also housed at Prairie Hill. She screens students and helps children in the area understand the needs and feelings of those who have experienced hearing loss.

Similarly, specialists in the areas of art, music and P.E. have built strong collaborative relationships with educators in neighboring elementary and high school districts. Through a combined effort, the staff has accessed grant monies that benefit the children in all of the schools that feed into the high school district. These monies and shared strategies focus on building physical fitness as a lifestyle, integrating art and music into the classrooms, and securing the enjoyment of each in the community.

General education classroom teachers have also built strong relationships with educators and administrators from other area schools. Grade-level partnerships have been formed that provide opportunities for shared curriculum learning activities across districts, including joint field trips, team presentations at state level education conferences, and improved curriculum activities.

4. Engaging Families and Community:

Prairie Hill is proud to be a place where students, staff, parents, community members, and alumni work together to foster a strong learning environment, in connection with the key principles needed to encourage good character in each child. Parents and community members are encouraged to remain actively involved in our educational culture.

This tradition of stakeholder involvement starts each year with Back-to-School Night. Parents are afforded the opportunity to become part of the learning process by meeting with the teachers, principal and other staff and previewing the grade-level curricula. Contact with families and community is maintained through email, newsletters, district-wide phone calls, and announcements displayed on the marquee outside the school. Moreover, teachers communicate daily with parents through student agendas to further ensure constant communication.

Volunteers are an intricate part of the Prairie Hill culture. Community members and parents alike provide individualized help on a daily basis in classrooms and the library. Volunteers can be found providing reading and math support, as well as implementing language strategies for students whose native language is not English. They are utilized to actively engage learners who struggle, as well as those who excel, by helping to further differentiate the learning environment for students. Volunteer work is utilized outside the classroom as well, to assist with school screenings as well as after school activities.

Prairie Hill tradition includes numerous annual events. Students, staff, and parents alike look forward to walking through the balloon archway on opening day, the Back-To-School BBQ, Family Movie and Fun Nights, Pajama Night, Sweets With Someone Special, and the School Carnival, just to name a few. This sense of tradition helps establish the school as one to which alumni return to enroll their own children. Many of the aforementioned annual events are sponsored by the devoted Parent-Staff Association (PSA). The PSA also sponsors a Jog-a-thon, a school-wide fundraiser that provides funding for countless teacher requisitions. Similarly, the Tees For Technology golf outing funds the purchase of iPads and other hands-on technology for the classroom.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The Prairie Hill curriculum is a product of collaboration between grade-level teams of classroom teachers, specialists, and administrators. Together these stakeholders are engaged in the process of aligning the curriculum to reflect the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and math. Following best practices and procedures, each grade level uses specific criteria to identify Power Standards, which are vertically articulated from pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) through grade four. These priority standards are then aligned with units of instruction within each grade level. Grade level teams also collaborate to design grade-level pacing guides that identify the Power Standards for each quarter. Additionally, common formative assessments will be aligned to Power Standards to ensure that teachers receive the feedback required to further differentiate instruction. As a result of this process (within and across grade levels), instruction, intervention and enrichment provided to students is based on the CCSS.

The English Language Arts/reading program at Prairie Hill reflects the CCSS by teaching deeply and helping students become problem solvers and independent learners. With teaching approaches (e.g. Reading Recovery, workshop, literacy block, enrichment instruction) and resources (e.g. classroom computers, iPads, book room, library) that are designed to meet the needs of all students, students are encouraged to become lifelong readers and writers. Additionally, cross-curricular connections to science and social studies are made through reading.

Differentiated instruction and high expectations are the hallmark of the math program as well. Student-driven instruction is emphasized through the use of Guided Math. This approach allows for feedback on the CCSS through the use of formative assessments. Large scale projects are also used to integrate math in contextualized situations. Additionally, a variety of technological tools (e.g. Educreations, Edmodo, interactive notebooks) is used daily to enhance instruction. Math lessons are further used to make cross-curricular connections to science and social studies.

“Specials” at Prairie Hill include music, art, P.E. and computer classes for students Kindergarten (K) through grade four. These courses are not perceived as stand-alone classes, but rather are viewed as an extension of the learning done in the general education classrooms.

The music curriculum provides students with the opportunity to sing and play a variety of instruments as well as develop an appreciation for historical and cultural concepts reflected in music. Similarly, through the use of multimedia and diverse, cross-curriculum subject matter, the visual art teachers challenge students to express their creativity, spatial imaging and engage in problem-solving while utilizing their fine motor skills.

Guided by research and reflection, Prairie Hill’s physical education curriculum focuses on developing students’ fundamental movement skills through a variety of different games and activities. The importance of teamwork is reinforced through self-directed learning and problem-solving skills. Computer classes are designed to provide equal opportunities for learners to experience multi-faceted technological learning. By integrating instructional and informational technology to meet the curriculum requirements, all students have an opportunity to advance individually and as a community of learners. The blended pre-K program is new to Prairie Hill this year. The curriculum was designed to reflect Early Learning Standards, in alignment with the CCSS. A daily, half-day program designed for students ages three through five, the program ensures that its students will confidently enter grade K, already knowledgeable in the routines and expectations of the school.

Several Prairie Hill teachers are gifted certified. In collaboration with other teachers, they provide knowledge and encouragement as to how to differentiate for higher-level thinkers in the general education classroom. Additionally, a resource person dedicates time to high-achieving students in a small group setting outside the regular classroom several times a week.

Prairie Hill also features a self-contained special education program, Educational Skills Management (ESM). The program follows a framework designed to teach emotionally and behaviorally disabled students how to function appropriately and successfully in an academic setting while maintaining curricular alignment with the regular classrooms. As students demonstrate improvement in self-regulation of behaviors, they are increasingly included with the general education population, while receiving scaffold support from the ESM teacher and paraprofessionals.

2. Reading/English:

The reading program at Prairie Hill is founded on teaching all students how to read, comprehend, and write so that they may become independent and lifelong readers, writers and learners. The focus is on the following essential components: a classroom literacy framework, school-embedded professional development, intervention programs for struggling learners, Reading Recovery, and assessment of continual literacy growth.

The administration and school board have a strong commitment to providing professional development opportunities to the staff. Teachers are encouraged to refine their teaching strategies to better facilitate students in becoming fluent, strategic and joyful readers and writers. Overall, the literacy model uses a workshop approach designed to best meet the needs of all students. This includes a balance of whole group, small group and individual conferences within an integrated, inquiry-based curriculum. Teachers follow the CCSS in order to teach deeply and help students become problem solvers and independent learners.

Each day, students spend their literacy blocks reading, writing, working with words, conferencing with teachers, setting goals, and problem solving with peers. Each grade level allots 120 minutes to focus on the most fragile as well as the most advanced readers. Additionally, three times a year students in grades K through two are given comprehensive, one-on-one assessments that measure students' instructional and independent reading ability. This data allows teachers to improve decision-making and teaching strategies for each student.

In addition, Prairie Hill has four trained Reading Recovery teachers, in varying roles. They meet individually with at-risk first-graders five times a week, for approximately 20 weeks, to provide intensive early intervention. During this time, students are taught strategies for decoding and comprehension, as well as techniques for becoming independent readers.

The district has also invested a substantial amount of money in support of resources for the reading program including the library, a book room, and classroom technology. The Prairie Hill library has 9,939 different titles in its collection, services 463 patrons, and averages 43,000 checkouts per year. With such resources available, teachers are able to direct students toward a variety of avenues for independent discovery including works of fiction and nonfiction, poetry, author studies, and textbooks. Likewise, students frequently employ technology such as classroom computers and iPads, to seek information, produce products, and conduct research.

3. Mathematics:

At Prairie Hill the students' exceptional performance in math is due to hard work, high expectations, effective differentiation, and creative teaching techniques applied in technology-supported classrooms. School leadership, combined with the collaborative and involved community of educators and families, has fostered an environment where teachers feel inspired to try new methods.

During Guided Math, for instance, the students are placed in groups to allow for more student-driven instruction. Ability level groups work with other students that are at their level. During "mini lessons" groups that need to go over concepts again are able to do so, while other groups can expand on concepts instead. A grade-4 teacher might use a mini lesson to teach one group of students double digit by double digit multiplication, spending extra time explaining and modeling the process, while another group is directed toward four digit by two digit multiplication. In contrast, heterogeneous groups include students of

mixed levels of ability. In these groups, students learn from each other and are also afforded the opportunity to become leaders.

Guided Math also includes the use of math journals in which students are able to do problem solving at individual levels. The journals also provide time for students to practice skills independently with pencil and paper. Both of these tasks are utilized as formative assessments to monitor growth and show mastery of the CCSS.

Teachers also create overarching projects with math integrations. During the Olympics students tracked data, represented data in a variety of graphs, converted elements into fractional parts of the whole, calculated distances to international locations, analyzed aerial views of Olympic campuses, and searched for 2D and 3D figures by name.

Technology is incorporated in daily math lessons to assist in the learning process. Educreations video lessons make it possible for our educators to show a video to one group of students while teaching a mini lesson to another. These video lessons also assist substitute teachers by ensuring that the same expectations of learning are in place when a teacher is absent. Edmodo is an internet-based communication tool and resource we use to share teaching techniques among teachers, or specific skill lesson videos between teachers and students. Students can access videos at home or in class when the teacher is with other students. Students also use interactive notebooks to track new concepts they are learning about, creating living documents which are continuously added to and referenced.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

In the 2013-2014 school year, Prairie Hill introduced a pre-K program. The administration and staff delved into the current research and best practices in early childhood education to create a fully blended program that spans the ages of three through five and includes students of all abilities. The pre-K team worked directly with the Early Childhood staff at Illinois State University and the Metcalf Lab School staff to develop a meaningful, well-rounded curriculum.

The pre-K program focuses on building strong social and positive interactive skills. Weekly lessons offer opportunities for gross and fine motor development, exposure to high quality literature, alphabet and number sense activities as well as meaningful implementation of imaginative play. The teaching occurs in an enriching environment that builds excitement and a natural curiosity for learning. Lessons are focused on Early Learning Standards and are aligned with CCSS while providing a meaningful context that naturally allows children to generalize these skills into not only the educational environment, but their homes and community as well.

On-going assessments are designed to document development in order to create an individualized program for each student. With administrative support, class size has remained at 12 students per section. This teacher to child ratio (one to six) allows the pre-K teachers to focus on supporting the specific needs of each child, building on existing skills as well as remediating when necessary.

Although still in its infancy, the program already supports students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) as well as those from non-English speaking homes. As a result of attending the daily pre-K program, these children will enter grade K confident of their environment, knowledgeable in the routines and expectations of their home school, and ready for the challenge of a full-day program.

Additionally, Prairie Hill houses a self-contained special education program, Educational Skills Management (ESM), that combines a framework to teach emotionally and behaviorally disabled students how to function appropriately and successfully in an academic setting. The ESM program focuses on providing an effective and consistent support base with social skill and core curricular instruction to promote student success. In the ESM classroom, learning activities are differentiated for each student and a variety of instructional strategies are used to reinforce concepts and skills required for each grade level. As students succeed in self-regulation of behaviors, they are increasingly included with the general education population with scaffold support from the ESM teacher and paraprofessionals.

5. Instructional Methods:

The teaching staff at Prairie Hill implements a combination of whole group, small group and individualized instruction to provide daily content concentrating on reading, math, and social sciences. Teachers utilize every inch of their classrooms to stage learning centers, incorporate available technology, designate space for cooperative groups, and promote both social and emotional growth.

Prairie Hill uses benchmark monitoring and progress monitoring, as well as classroom and grade-level assessments to facilitate instruction and intervention. In this way, every student is challenged to work at his/her own instructional level. Teachers and intervention specialists are able to create small groups, based on student skill level, within their classrooms and grade levels. For example, students who have scored above average on benchmarks or classroom assessments might be placed in a small group that expands a lesson with further research projects. In contrast, students who have scored in the below average range might be placed in small group that allows for more practice, further explanation, or re-teaching of a given lesson or skill. Similarly, small groups are created for students who fall in the average range to further enrich their skills.

Prairie Hill has two special education teachers who collaborate with all general education teachers to implement Individualized Education Program (IEP) needs. These teachers provide support in the form of co-teaching, or through additional special education instructional time. This time is used to pre-teach, re-teach and further social, emotional and academic growth as needed, allowing IEP students to achieve their individualized goals within the least restrictive environment. In addition, nine paraprofessionals work not only with IEP students, but throughout the school as needed (e.g. small group work, art, P.E., Response to Intervention, data entry of assessments and progress monitoring, library and computer classes).

The use of technology as a tool allows for further differentiation of instruction. Interactive smart boards, for example, provide teachers and students with the opportunities to be actively engaged with their learning. Research-based approaches to multi-sensory teaching and learning lend a greater impact to teaching and encourage an increased retention of information and life-long skills.

6. Professional Development:

The Prairie Hill professional development plan is a multi-layered program which reflects district, school and individual teacher goals. District goals have emphasized the adoption and implementation of the CCSS. As part of the district initiative, Prairie Hill has been afforded the opportunity to work with two consultants over the past two years focusing on unpacking the CCSS, aligning the curriculum, and developing common formative assessments (CFAs). The staff has embraced this opportunity by structuring the daily schedule to maximize instructional time while strategically balancing preparation periods to incorporate daily collaboration. Extended minutes of teacher planning time are deemed essential for teacher growth as it allows for additional processing of professional development topics and the subsequent impact on their teaching.

Additionally, the principal secures release time for teachers throughout the year so that each grade can analyze their students' performance, develop individual intervention plans for students, and draw from each other's teaching experience. The latter is a quintessential example of teachers teaching teachers. In these Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) there are no pretenses, no judgments, and no disappointments, as teachers pull for each other and celebrate each other's successes. As a result of the PLC collaboration, the focus has changed from whole-class performance to individual student growth. The Prairie Hill staff believes that extraordinary learning is the result of extraordinary teaching.

Therefore, every teacher develops a single instructional goal each year and is given every opportunity to meet that goal through research and experimentation. Teachers attend numerous seminars, workshops and conventions throughout the year aimed at meeting their stated goal. The only requirement is that they share their findings with their colleagues and complete an informal action plan as they attempt to implement newly acquired strategies and practices. Part of every teacher's evaluation provides reflection on their

yearly goal, how it has changed their instructional practice, and its ultimate impact on enhanced student performance.

7. School Leadership

The primary focus of the Prairie Hill leadership is on student success. This emphasis goes beyond the achievement of test scores to the establishment of a personal relationship with every student in the school. The principal makes a sincere effort to connect with all students and believes that without such connections, students cannot be given expectations to learn and become productive participants of the Prairie Hill community. His leadership goes beyond establishing visibility and learning student names. He makes a concerted effort to engage with students on a daily basis in order to know each one on a personal level: their activities within the community; their likes and dislikes; their hopes and dreams for the future.

Moreover, as an instructional leader, the principal encourages teachers to take professional risks. With an open mind, he observes and guides creativity when teachers aspire to try new approaches in the classroom. He holds the philosophy that without risk, and a willingness to fail, teachers will become stale in their profession. He holds the belief that the freshness of creativity promotes professional as well as student growth. Individuality is fostered through this open-minded approach, and teachers are encouraged to implement new initiatives in their classrooms such as Project-Based Learning, Guided Math and Daily Five literacy. The principal empathizes with the struggles of teachers and the personal emotions involved when a student is unable to succeed. He maintains a supportive attitude of action and commitment, and consistently recognizes the dedication and efforts of teachers and school staff.

Prairie Hill is a collaborative and participatory environment with many leaders who share the mission of promoting a lifetime of learning. A schedule created by the principal allows for daily team collaboration time and bi-monthly meetings in which rotating team leaders share their ideas, struggles, and successes. These opportunities give a voice to all staff members and promote positive working relationships that focus on continued growth in student achievement. Several committees proactively address the growth and ever-changing needs of the school and community. Parent involvement on committees fosters the intimate climate that has been a long-standing, salient characteristic of Prairie Hill. Committees range from school safety to curriculum and assessment, but all share the goal of maintaining the high standards of the district.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: ISAT

All Students Tested/Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher:

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards	81	99	99	98	94
% Exceeds Standards	16	64	66	58	55
Number of students tested	88	90	77	83	86
Percent of total students tested	99	99	100	100	98
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	1	1	0	0	2
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	1	0	0	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards	54	100			
% Exceeds Standards	8	40			
Number of students tested	13	10			
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					

6. Asian Students					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards	83	99	99	99	95
% Exceeds Standards	17	65	64	59	56
Number of students tested	82	80	70	75	81
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets Standards plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: *Composite ISAT scores for 2013 are calculated using new cut scores introduced by ISBE in 2013 to align state tests with the more rigorous Common Core State Standards. The higher cut scores resulted in a decline in the number of students meeting or exceeding standards. Despite a dip from previous years, Prairie Hill's 3rd grade math scores were 26 percentage points above the state average (81% for Prairie Hill, 55% for state average).

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math
All Students Tested/Grade: 4
Publisher:

Test:
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	88	97	98	98	97
% Exceeds	21	62	42	38	57
Number of students tested	96	76	86	88	67
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	98	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	1	0	0	2	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	0	0	2	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	70	100		80	
% Exceeds	20	31		20	
Number of students tested				10	
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	88	97	97	98	97
% Exceeds	21	63	43	38	57
Number of students tested	85	71	79	88	67
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: *Composite ISAT scores for 2013 are calculated using new cut scores introduced by ISBE in 2013 to align state tests with the more rigorous Common Core State Standards. The higher cut scores resulted in a decline in the number of students meeting or exceeding standards. Despite the dip from previous years, Prairie Hill's 4th grade math scores performed 28 percentage points above the state average in 2013 (88% for Prairie Hill, 60% for state average).

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA
All Students Tested/Grade: 3
Publisher:

Test:
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	81	96	99	91	93
% Exceeds	40	53	52	48	41
Number of students tested	82	80	71	84	86
Percent of total students tested	99	99	100	100	98
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	1	1	0	0	2
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	1	0	0	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	46	90			
% Exceeds	15	20			
Number of students tested	13	10			
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	82	95	99	92	94
% Exceeds	40	53	52	50	42
Number of students tested	82	80	71	76	81
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: *Composite ISAT scores for 2013 are calculated using new cut scores introduced by ISBE in 2013 to align state tests with the more rigorous Common Core State Standards. The higher cut scores resulted in a decline in the number of students meeting or exceeding standards. Despite the dip in scores, Prairie Hill's 3rd grade reading scores 22 percentage points above the state average. While 40% of Prairie Hill students scored in the exceeds category, only 19% of students did so throughout the state.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA
All Students Tested/Grade: 4
Publisher:

Test:
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	81	96	91	89	92
% Exceeds	20	56	44	45	49
Number of students tested	96	77	86	94	75
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	98	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	1	0	0	2	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	0	0	2	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	60	92		70	
% Exceeds	10	15		30	
Number of students tested	10	13		10	
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	82	96	92	92	93
% Exceeds	21	56	44	47	51
Number of students tested	85	72	79	88	67
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: *Composite ISAT scores for 2013 are calculated using new cut scores introduced by ISBE in 2013 to align state tests with the more rigorous Common Core State Standards. The higher cut scores resulted in a decline in the number of students meeting or exceeding standards. Despite the dip from previous years, Prairie Hill's 4th grade students outperformed the state average by 22 percentage points in reading (81% at Prairie Hill to 59% state average).